DATAQUALITY
CAMPAIGN
Using Data To Improve Student Achievement
www.DataQualityCampaign.org

In-Depth Analysis: States Collect Quality Education Data
But Not Supporting Data Use to Improve Student Achievement

Washington, DC, February 16, 2011 – The Data Quality Campaign's (DQC) sixth annual state analysis, *Data for Action 2010*, reveals that states have made unprecedented progress collecting longitudinal information but have not taken action to ensure data are used to improve student achievement.

When the DQC launched in 2005, no state had all 10 Essential Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems. Now, 24 states report they have implemented all 10 Essential Elements, and every state has committed to implement them by September 2011. States that implement the 10 Essential Elements have the necessary information to understand what works in education and can allocate scarce resources accordingly to improve student achievement.

"I have long been a believer in the power of data to drive sound decisions," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "Data gives us the roadmap to reform. It tells us where we are, where we need to go, and who is most at-risk. That cycle of continuous improvement cannot work unless states have good data and are willing to use it. This information strengthens accountability and transparency, and empowers families to make informed choices," Duncan continued.

In spite of this progress, the elements that lag behind are also those that are most critical to current policy discussions. Seventeen states cannot link teacher and student data, 15 states do not collect course-taking information, and 11 states report the inability to link K-12 and postsecondary data. These states cannot inform critical policy questions about teacher effectiveness and college and career readiness despite the growing demand for answers.

The results show that the barriers to implementing the 10 Essential Elements are not technical but instead require leadership and political will. This is evidenced by Idaho's dramatic growth from three to 10 Essential Elements in just one year.

"I am proud of the progress Idaho has made in a short amount of time. Last year, we were the last state in the nation to implement a longitudinal data system. Now, we are on par with some of the most advanced systems across the United States," Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction and Council of Chief State School Officers President-Elect Tom Luna said. "In Idaho, we now will have current, accurate data to make better-informed decisions at all levels and to give classroom teachers the data they need to guide instruction every day."

In addition to tracking state progress toward implementing the 10 Essential Elements, the DQC also tracks the 10 State Actions to Ensure Effective Data Use. No state has taken all 10 State Actions, so the rich data that states now collect are not strategically linked. Stakeholders do not have appropriate

access to these data while protecting privacy, and they do not have the capacity to use data to improve student achievement. For example, although states have made some progress linking student and teacher data, only two states automatically share this information with educator preparation institutions, limiting their ability to improve programs and ensure all educators are prepared to be effective in the classroom.

"For the first time, half of the country can answer almost any critical question confronting policymakers, and every state is poised to have this capacity by September. There are no more excuses," said Aimee Guidera, executive director of the Data Quality Campaign. "We are at a critical juncture in education, and state policymakers must take action to ensure data are not only collected but used by education stakeholders to improve student achievement."

To support this culture change, the state analysis identifies five key priorities that states must implement to leverage current investments and ensure data are used:

* Fulfill the 50-state commitment to implement the 10 Essential Elements by September 2011.
* Link K–12 with early childhood, postsecondary and workforce data to answer critical policy questions.
* Provide teachers, students and parents with access to longitudinal student-level data.
* Share data about teacher impact on student achievement with educator preparation institutions.
* Enact statewide preservice policies, including certification and licensure, and program approval, to build educator capacity to use data.

The DQC's state analysis comes at a time when states have made unprecedented progress but are also facing dramatic budget cuts. In spite of this pressure, state policymakers remain committed to supporting data use to improve student achievement.

"It has long been a guiding principle of the O'Malley-Brown Administration that the things that get measured are the things that get done," said Governor O'Malley, the DQC's 2010 State Policymaker of the Year. "We owe it to our students, parents, teachers and administrators to uphold the highest standards of accountability and transparency, and that starts with establishing quality education data systems to ensure Maryland students graduate high school prepared for college and highly skilled careers."

In addition to releasing *Data for Action 2010: DQC's State Analysis*, the DQC also recognized exemplary leaders who are changing the culture around data use through the Award Recognition Program:
* State Policymaker: Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley for his efforts to lead stakeholders in building robust statewide data systems that span early childhood to the workforce and protect data privacy, helping to ensure students graduate college and career ready.
* State Data Leader: Georgia Department of Education's Chief Information Officer Bob Swiggum for developing an integrated, cost-effective statewide education data system that allows teachers and principals to easily access and use data to make informed education decisions.
* District Data Leader: Denver Public Schools' Director of Assessment Technology and Accountability Jason Martinez for providing educators with access to data to empower their decisionmaking.

For more information on the Data Quality Campaign and the Award Recognition Program, please visit our website at: http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/.

Interviews with representatives from the Data Quality Campaign and the award winners can be arranged by contacting Rachel Zaentz at rachel.zaentz@widmeyer.com or 202.667.0901.

Related event: On March 10, 2011, DQC, in partnership with the Early Childhood Data Collaborative, will release the inaugural state analysis of coordinated state early care and education data systems. To register for this event or attain more information, visit: http://dataqualitycampaign.org/events/details/286.

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement. The campaign provides tools and resources that will help states implement and use longitudinal data systems, while providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focused on improving data quality, access and use.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is DQC´s founding funder; additional support has been provided by the Casey Family Programs, the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Connect with the DQC on Facebook and @EdDataCampaign
Get news direct from the DQC via RSS: http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/about/rss